

# Georgia Outdoors

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how many times?

## The One That Got Away

Hunting and Fishing . . . One of Man's Greatest Joys



Photo by Jim Morrison



Photo by Wolter Stephens

Forgetting your troubles and relaxing in the outdoors is easy in Georgia, where there's no price tag high enough for the excitement and pleasure of telling "how the big one got away," . . . or didn't.

**H**OW MANY TIMES have you heard hunters and fishermen tell stories about "the big one that got away"?

For most of us, that phrase is a reminder of how much fun hunting and fishing really is. Many of you like to hunt and fish, but you probably don't get to do half the hunting and fishing you'd like to. If you're in this category, you don't have to be sold on how much fun and relaxation you can get out of hunting and fishing.

Because hunting and fishing are so much fun, there isn't any doubt in the minds of hunters and fishermen that good hunting and fishing is worthwhile, even if you don't make any money while you're doing it. If there isn't another reason why we need good hunting and fishing in Geor-

gia, this would be enough by itself.

But let's look at hunting and fishing from the standpoint of our children.

### Why Are Hunting and Fishing Important?

Today in the United States, a lot is being said about juvenile delinquency. One of the points most often brought up is that young people don't have anything to do in their spare time. Another is that their parents aren't spending enough time with their children doing something that both of them like to do. There is no finer way for a family to spend a weekend together than in the great outdoors, fishing for bream with a cane pole, teaching the children how to water ski, or maybe roasting wieners around a fire on the



Walter Stephens

Fishing knows no age limit. Georgia needs more areas where families can be together in a wholesome atmosphere.

shore of a lake at sunset.

It's an interesting fact that one out of every three persons in the State of Georgia does some hunting or fishing every year. But suppose you are one of those persons who doesn't hunt or fish, either because you don't have the time or because no one ever took time to show you how much fun it is.

Leaving the recreational value of hunting and fishing aside, hunting and fishing is still big business in Georgia. Every year, our hunters and fishermen spend millions of dollars. The average sportsman in Georgia spends more than \$106 a year on hunting and fishing. This figure includes how much the average sportsman spends on fishing rods, guns, ammunition, bait, fishing license, outboard motors, and a lot of other overlooked expenses like gasoline for his car, meals and food he buys away from home, and motel bills. All together, these figures show that each year people who hunt and fish are putting more than 100 million dollars a year into the economy of our State by going hunting or fishing. That's big business in anybody's book.



Jim Morrison

Georgia has all the saltwater sport fishing found on the Atlantic or Gulf shoreline, yet many anglers leave Georgia everyday to fish in more highly developed and promoted fishing waters.

It should also be pointed out that hunting and fishing are two of the strongest attractions Georgia has to offer tourists, not only of the "See Georgia First" variety, but also those from outside the state. For example, how many Georgians do you know who have made special trips to go fishing in Florida, even though Georgia has all the saltwater and freshwater fish found in Florida, plus a few that Florida doesn't have, like the rainbow trout.

We're also making a big effort in this State to attract new industry away from other states with less advantages to offer. One of the strongest cards we can have is to show that Georgia is a good place for employees to live — and that means that it should also be a good place to enjoy life. For many a skilled technician or a trained engineer, what greater attraction could an industry provide than a home in a State with good hunting and fishing?

Hunting and fishing is important to our State because it provides Georgians with wholesome recreation for the young and old alike. Because it is a big business, it is one of our best tourist attractions, and it helps us attract new industry and the skilled employees that industry demands. These are the reasons why we need to have an outstanding wildlife conservation program in our State if we are to have good hunting and fishing.

These are the reasons why many years ago in 1911 the General Assembly passed a law requiring hunters to buy a two dollar statewide hunting license. In 1937, the General Assembly passed another law setting up a one dollar fishing license. Today, after a few temporary increases, we still have virtually the same license fees for hunting and fishing to pay for our wildlife program, even though the costs of such programs have soared in the last 28 years.



Jim Morrison

The average Georgia sportsman spends more than \$106 a year on food, gasoline, lodging, and many other items which make hunting and fishing a 100 million dollar business for Georgia every year.



Jim Morrison

Georgia's combination license fee of \$3.25 is the lowest in the Nation for hunting and fishing.

### Who Pays For Wildlife Conservation?

Under Georgia law, only persons who hunt and fish pay for the wildlife program. Even though people who don't hunt or fish profit from it in many ways, these people aren't paying the bills for the operation of our State's Game and Fish Commission. The sportsman benefits most from the operations of the Commission, and it is only fair that he pay the most for its operations. The license fee that the sportsman pays is an earmarked tax. Under State law, an amount equal to that collected by license sales must be appropriated each year by the General Assembly back to the Game and Fish Commission.

Most sportsmen don't consider their license to be a tax. No one has to buy one, unless he



Jim Morrison

In Georgia, the wildlife conservation program is financed by license fees collected from sportsmen.

hunts or fishes. The license is a legal document that gives the sportsman the privilege to hunt or fish anywhere in Georgia by any legal means. A hunting or fishing license has more in common with a ticket to a ball game than it has to sales taxes or income taxes. If the license is a tax, then it's the fairest one we have, since only those persons who are getting the benefits pay the cost. Most of our sportsmen are glad to pay for their licenses to keep the good hunting and fishing that we've always had and to make it better in the future.

### Is The License Fee Too High?

You can't say that this fee is too high, when the average sportsman spends more than \$100 a year for hunting and fishing, and only \$1.25 of that goes for a fishing license. One box of pink worms costs that much for a single trip, let alone a tank of outboard motor fuel. A hunting license costs \$2.25. That's less than the price of a box of shotgun shells, and how long does that last on a good dove shoot?

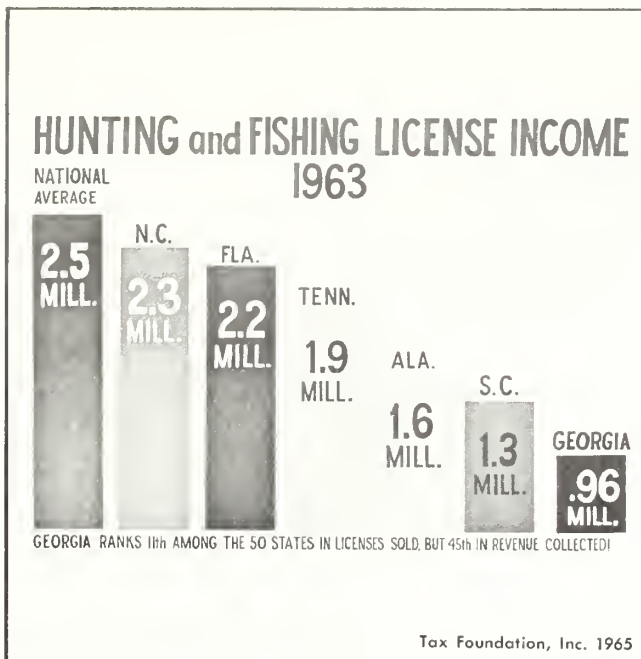
It's very seldom that you'll hear the average sportsman complain about paying our present license fee, and there are several good reasons. One of the most important is that the sportsman is getting his money's worth in fun and relaxation out of hunting and fishing. That enjoyment has been materially aided by the efforts of the Game and Fish Commission. The second reason is that the license fee he's paying is now the lowest in the Nation. On top of that — only five states have a lower total income on license sales than Georgia. Georgia is the largest State east of the Mississippi River. It has more citizens



Jim Morrison

The finest deer hunting in Georgia is found on State Game Management Areas.

than 33 of the 50 states. But the only states which have a lower income on hunting and fishing license fees than Georgia are Delaware, Hawaii, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Vermont. None of these States even approach Georgia in population or in size.

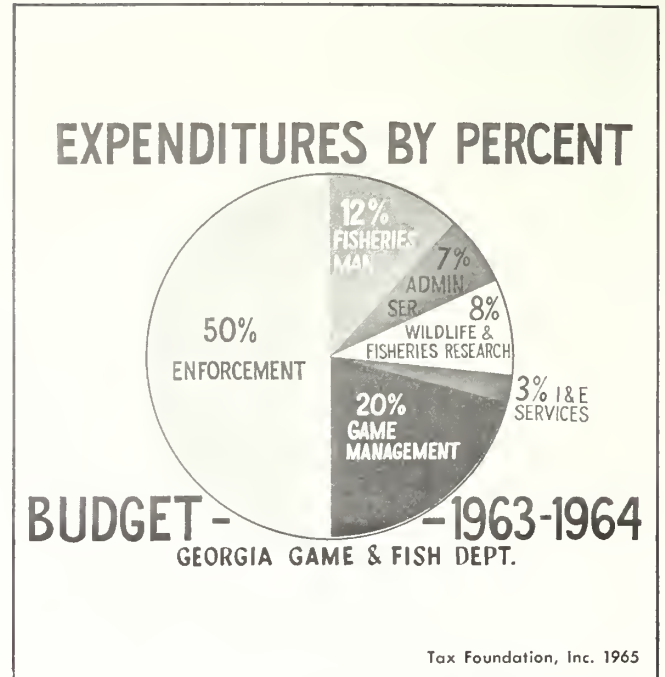


Only 10 states sell more hunting and fishing licenses each year than Georgia does, 44 states take in more income from license sales because of higher license fees than Georgia's.

#### How Does Georgia Stand?

When we look at the figures for the South-eastern States, we find that Georgia is at the bottom of the column in the Southeast on license income for wildlife conservation, with an income in 1963 of less than half the national average. The picture is the same today, and getting worse. Since the information shown on this chart was compiled, Florida has raised the price of its fishing license from \$2.25 to \$3.25. Tennessee has raised the price of its single hunting and fishing license fee from \$3.25 to \$5.25. Many of the other states in the nation have raised their fees in recent years, or have plans to do so in the near future. Georgia is already behind the nation, and falling even further behind. Looking at this picture, how can we hope to have as good hunting and fishing in our State as our neighbors when we're spending only half as much as they are?

Based on what the present number of license sales are and with the addition of boat registration fees and federal aid, the Game and Fish Commission has an annual budget of about two and a quarter million dollars. That may sound like a lot, but it's not—when you consider that North Carolina and Florida both spend a million dollars more each year than Georgia does on developing good hunting and fishing. Both these States are roughly the same population and geographical size as Georgia.



The Georgia budget of two and a quarter million dollars is one of the lowest in the nation.

#### How Is the Sportsman's Dollar Spent Now?

Approximately half the budget of the Game and Fish Commission, or more than one million dollars, is presently devoted to law enforcement. This is the most important program of the department. Many of the game animals and fish that are now common would not exist if we did not have game laws and wildlife rangers to enforce them. Remember the carrier pigeon? He's only one example of what can happen to small game when uncontrolled slaughter is allowed. Big game animals like deer and turkeys are even more susceptible to poaching, dogs, and over-hunting.

In addition to game protection, rangers perform valuable tasks in keeping Georgia's lakes and streams safe by making periodic inspections of boats for safety equipment and safe operation.

Approximately 20 per cent of the Department's budget goes into game management, including the operation of public hunting areas and such programs as deer and turkey stocking. As a result of good law enforcement and wise game management, Georgia now has deer in every single county in the State, with seasons in half of the 159 counties, although deer once were practically extinct everywhere in Georgia. Twelve per cent goes for fish management, including the operation of eight fish hatcheries which provide fish for public and private streams. As a result of fish management, white bass are now a popular and plentiful species in many large Georgia reservoirs. Stockings of many other desirable game fish are now in progress, including walleye, striped bass, and rainbow trout in cold-water reservoirs.

Eight per cent of the Department's budget is



Jim Morrison

Wildlife rangers perform many valuable services for sportsmen, including providing information on good hunting and fishing locations.



Walter Stephens

Scientific management of Georgia's fishing waters and hunting grounds have materially improved hunting and fishing success. Such programs must be expanded to provide for future needs.

used for research into methods for improving hunting and fishing. This amount should be greatly increased. Administration of the entire program takes seven per cent. Three per cent is devoted to telling Georgia sportsmen what the Department is doing, and how they can help, as well as informing sportsmen where and how to hunt and fish.

### Is The Money Well Spent?

The program of our State's Game and Fish Commission is a good one which needs no apologies. Much good has been accomplished by the Game and Fish Department with its present small budget, but much more needs to be done than can be accomplished with the present inadequate funds. Costs of the existing program have gone up, and new programs must be initiated if Georgia is to keep pace with other states.

Coca-Cola used to cost a nickel, now they cost a dime. In 1956, rangers started work at \$228 a



Because of active deer stacking programs financed by hunting license fees, deer have been restored to every county in Georgia, with hunting seasons in more than half the counties.



Jim Morrison

Fighting white bass are just one of many new species of game fish successfully introduced into Georgia waters by Game and Fish Department technicians.



Jim Morrison

Information on where and how to hunt and fish is eagerly sought by Georgia sportsmen, who look to the Game and Fish Commission for more and more assistance each year.

month; now they begin work at \$326 a month.

Progressive states like Florida have constructed launching ramps on hundreds of inaccessible streams and lakes. Public fishing lakes have been set up in every county in the State. Georgia has only two such lakes, and no launching ramp or public access program. To keep pace, Georgia must increase its Game and Fish Budget.



Many fine fishing streams in Georgia are closed to the average fisherman because of poor access. Hard surface launching ramps are urgently needed in more than 200 locations.

### What Is The Sportsman's Greatest Problem?

The primary problems facing the Game and Fish Commission which require more money are the same as those facing all our sportsmen today. The most difficult problem now is not so much providing good hunting and fishing as it is *providing a place to hunt and a place to fish*. This problem is getting more and more critical as our State rapidly changes from a rural State to an urban one, where more and more people have no place of their own to hunt and fish. This problem will become more critical as more people move to the city and seek to escape for a day's hunting and fishing in the country, where "no trespassing", "no fishing" and "no hunting" signs are blooming on every tree.

### How Can These Problems Be Solved?

Georgia has much good hunting and fishing which is not open to the public. The problem of the Game and Fish Commission is to open this land and these waters to the public, either by leasing or buying good hunting and fishing areas,



Walter Stephens

Opening hunting and fishing areas to the public is the greatest problem facing Georgia's sportsmen today. More funds are needed to finance the operation of such areas.

or by constructing launching ramps and access areas on good fishing streams and lakes, or by building its own chain of public fishing lakes.

A landowner liability law passed at last year's session of the General Assembly with Administration support will materially assist the Game and Fish Commission in opening private land to the public, but funds are needed to finance game management programs of stocking and protection on hunting areas leased to the State.

Some 18 such state hunting areas are now in existence, but twice as many more are needed in large areas of Georgia where none now exist.



Walter Stephens

Public fishing areas easily accessible by automobile from nearby metropolitan areas are badly needed to ring Georgia's growing urban population.

### How Much Do Such Areas Cost?

Public fishing areas, such as the one recently opened in McDuffie County, should be built by the Department in areas where they are needed, based on the number of fishing licenses sold there and the availability of existing public waters. These areas, constructed and operated by the Game and Fish Commission, would cost roughly a quarter of a million dollars each to initiate. Alabama for instance now has 20 such areas.

We need more than 200 launching ramps on many fine Georgia rivers with good fishing that are not accessible to the average fisherman. Some 35 to 50 of these ramps could be built by the Department at a cost of approximately \$2,000 each for a total of \$100,000 a year. Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee have had such a program for several years.

### Will Commission Employees Receive Higher Salaries?

Money from the one dollar increase in license fees which is being proposed will not be used to increase the salaries of the Game and Fish Commission's employees, who are under the State merit system and now receive periodic pay increases based on merit and longevity.

### What Will Be Done For My Section of The State?

No one section of the State will be favored over the other in the spending of this money, and all areas will benefit by it.

For example, a portion of this increase will

be used to initiate a badly-needed commercial fisheries program for the Georgia coast, where research is needed in increasing the commercial fishing harvest, especially on shrimp, oysters, and hard clams. A \$40,000 research vessel and four marine biologists are needed to initiate this program. A \$10,000 airplane will be purchased to help protect thousands of miles of inland sounds from immature shrimp and polluted oyster poaching which threatens the heart of the



With more and more people living in growing cities like Atlanta, pressures will increase on the few good public hunting and fishing areas available for sportsmen to "get away from it all."

commercial fishing industry. Public hunting and freshwater fishing areas are badly needed in the Savannah and Brunswick areas, along with boat launching ramps on popular freshwater rivers like the Savannah, Ogeechee, Altamaha, Satilla, and Saint Mary's, as well as on popular saltwater sounds. An accelerated program of tourist promotion of coastal sport fishing and facilities is urgently needed.

In South Georgia access areas and fisherman boat launching ramps are urgently needed on famous streams like the Alapaha, Altamaha, Canoochee, Chattahoochee, Flint, Ocmulgee, Ogeechee, Satilla, and Suwanee. Stream surveys and development work in these rivers are needed to improve fishing. At least five public hunting areas, especially for small game, are needed in game-rich portions of Southwest Georgia near Albany, Moultrie, Thomasville, and Valdosta.

Perhaps the greatest need for public hunting and fishing areas is in the Middle Georgia section, especially around large metropolitan areas like Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, and Macon. Access areas and boat ramps are needed on the Flint, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ogeechee and Savannah Rivers. Additional wildlife rangers are



Public hunting areas in game-rich areas of Southwest Georgia are few and far between, and new areas must be opened up for an increasing number of sportsmen seeking recreation in the outdoors.



Georgia's coast urgently needs research to restore its once-great oyster industry and other diversifications for its one-crop shrimp economy.

needed for boating safety patrols on Clark Hill, Sinclair, Jackson, and the Columbus area reservoirs.

In North Georgia, public hunting areas on federal land are more plentiful than anywhere in the State, but additional areas are needed solely for small game hunting, especially for quail, rabbits, and squirrel. Launching ramps and access areas are needed on the Conasauga, Chattahoochee, Coosawattee, Etowah, and Ostanaula Rivers. Trout stocking should be expanded to include suitable streams in Northwest Georgia, and to coldwater reservoirs like Lake Lanier and Lake Burton. The fighting smallmouth bass should be stocked in many streams too cold for warmwater fish, and too warm for trout. Additional rangers and patrol boats are needed for safety work on Lake Lanier, Allatoona, and Hartwell.

#### How Much of A License Increase Is Needed?

All of these proposals can be accomplished to a reasonable degree in the next few years by increasing the hunting and fishing license fees. The increase which the Administration will back is a modest one. The General Assembly will be asked for an increase of only one dollar each on the fishing license and the hunting license, with a two dollar increase in the total price of the combination license. No other changes are proposed in the present license requirements, such as doing away with the old-age license, lowering the age requirements to 15 or 12 years of age, or instituting a salt water license, a trout stamp,



Photo by Ronnie Abney

New programs of fisheries research and development are needed for North Georgia's fishing waters, such as trout stacking in Lake Lanier and other suitable cold-water reservoirs.

or a deer stamp.

Exactly how much additional money could be raised by a one dollar increase in the license fee is difficult to compute, since some slight reduction in the total license sales might occur in the year immediately following the increase. Based on 1964-1965 season license sales of 800,000 licenses, a one dollar increase could be expected to bring in approximately \$750,000 in additional funds for the Game and Fish Commission.

Even with the proposed increase, the Georgia license fees will still be below those of the five surrounding states of Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Even at \$2.25, our fishing license will be 50 cents below the national average at \$2.75, and our \$3.25 hunting license including deer hunting rights will be \$2.24 cents below the national average of \$5.49.

### Why Should The License Fees Be Increased?

Georgia now has a good wildlife conservation

program, but it must be expanded to keep up with our fellow states. The increase which the Administration will propose is a modest one which will not be excessive. Hunting and fishing in Georgia is a 100 million dollar business and getting bigger. Good hunting and fishing will pay dividends not only in increased recreation, but also in reduced juvenile delinquency, increased tourism, and additional attraction to new industry and skilled workers.

The primary problem is where to go hunting and fishing, and only the acquisition and development of public areas can meet this need. This program will be administered efficiently to produce the most results at the least cost, and all areas of the State will share in it.

If you will support this program, you will help our great State "pay for what it gets" in hunting and fishing. You, your children, and your State will be the winners.



Photo by Dean Wohlgemuth

The future of Georgia's hunting and fishing lies with the sportsman. His hands must not falter from the task ahead.

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